

SPRING 2026

SAINTS *Alive!*

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THE MAGAZINE OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH, ANTRIM

PLEASE GOD, GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO TAKE UP OUR CROSS

One of the most powerful verses in the Gospel is when Jesus turned towards Jerusalem, to confront his destiny. Instead of sidestepping those who were opposed to his teaching and opting for the path of least resistance, or a quiet life in the Galilean countryside, Jesus set off to Jerusalem.

Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus never took the easy option. From his birth where his cradle was an animal feeding trough to his death, where the only throne he occupied was a cross, he showed us that to be a follower is costly. Discipleship does not provide us with an entrance pass to the VIP enclosure, rather we are encouraged to follow a master for whom no task was beneath him, even washing the dusty, sweaty feet of his disciples.

One of the reasons Jesus came among us was to show us how much God the Father loves each one of us. He showed us by his own example, that God is always with us in our mess and in our pain. I think we would rather concentrate on the Christmas and Easter aspects of his life than on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The challenge of discipleship, taking up a cross, isn't really a vote winner, but Jesus tells us that we don't have to bear the burden on our own.

Not only that, he assures us that his burden is light, because he promises to walk with us to ease that burden.

I remember meeting a lady who was a patient in hospital.

She was no more than six stone and clinging on to life. She was attached to a drip with very little to rejoice about. I asked her how she was coping in all her adversity. She said she got the strength from knowing that

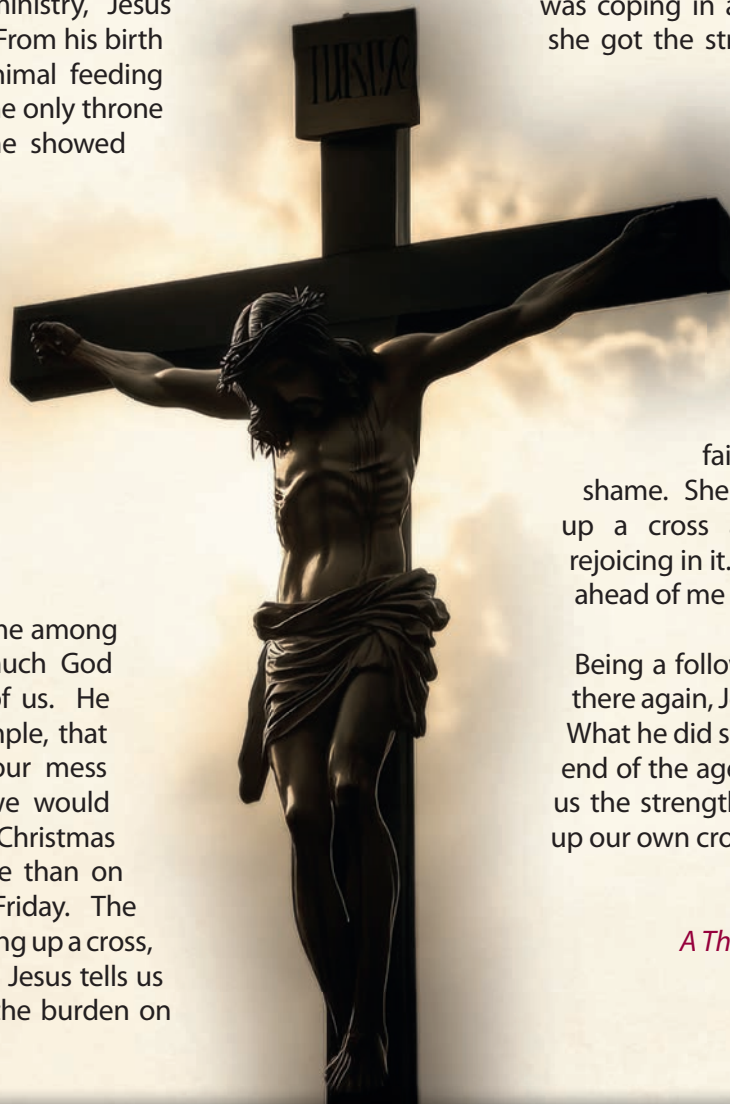
God was with her every moment of the day, every step of the journey she was enduring.

It is not often I meet someone with such a deep, uncomplicated but entirely realistic faith which puts mine to shame. She spoke to me about taking up a cross and not grumbling, but rejoicing in it. She is a true follower, way ahead of me on the journey of faith.

Being a follower of Jesus isn't easy, but there again, Jesus never said it would be. What he did say was I am with you to the end of the age. I pray that God will give us the strength and the courage to take up our own crosses and follow him.

Stephen McBride

*A Thought for the Day broadcast
Radio Ulster*





WHAT'S ON HOLY WEEK SERVICES

This year we are joining with our neighbours in Antrim Methodist Church, High Street Presbyterian Church and also Antrim Christian Fellowship Church.

Wednesday 1 April

7.30pm in Antrim Methodist Church

Maundy Thursday 2 April

7.30pm in Antrim Christian Fellowship Church

Good Friday 3 April

9.30am **Meditation Service**
in All Saints' Parish Centre

7.30pm **Tenebrae Service**
in High Street Presbyterian

Easter Sunday 5 April

7.30am **Dawn Service** at Lough Shore

11.30am **Family Service &
Holy Communion for Easter**
in All Saints' Parish Centre

ANTRIM CHURCHES 20th ANNUAL WALK OF WITNESS

We are looking forward to our eighteenth Walk of Witness on Good Friday 3 April. We are encouraged to meet at High Street at **11.00am** and we will be bussed to Antrim Methodist Church where the first service begins at **11.30am**. We will then walk down the Greystone Road into the town, to Antrim Fellowship Church in Lough Road, St Comgall's and then on to High Street Presbyterian for our concluding service at **1.30pm**. We hope to see you join us in this very powerful affirmation of our unity in the Christian faith.



EASTER GENERAL VESTRY
Monday 13 April at 7.00pm in the Parish Centre

EASTER MORNING DAWN SERVICE

We are having our Dawn Service at 7.30am the Lough Shore Car Park on Easter Sunday 5 April to celebrate our Lord's resurrection. This will take the form of a short service of Holy Communion followed by sausage baps back in the Parish Centre. These services have been moving and memorable occasions.



ANTRIM ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

On Tuesday 24 February the Vicar attended a presentation evening at the Royal British Legion Club at Lough Road, Antrim where the parishioners of All Saints were awarded a certificate of appreciation. Tasmin Fraser, Head of the Poppy Appeal Team thanked us for our fund raising which continues to help the members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families in times of need.



FIRE RESTORATION UPDATE

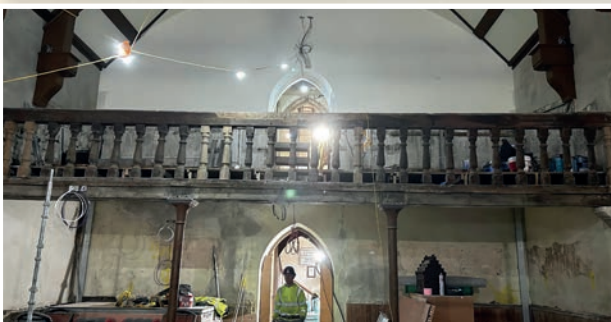
The work to restore our church continues at a great pace. It is only when people see photos of the extent of the scaffolding inside the church, that they realise the devastation that was caused by the smoke and soot.

Week by week there are magnificent signs of the marvellous work carried out by the employees of Felix O'Hare and their subcontractors. During the week beginning 23 February the process of dismantling the internal scaffolding began and bit by bit you were able to see the full extent of the renovations.

When the panelling of the gallery was removed, the original balusters were uncovered. Ian Maconachie, our restoration specialist is going to restore them to their former glory. Behind the balusters there will be a screen of etched glass and this will be tastefully underlit. The white panelling of the ceiling has given the building a feeling of being bright and airy instead of the previous gloomy brown ceiling.



We hope to have a celebration for our parishioners on Sunday 8 November at 11.30am when the Bishop of Connor will be with us. The Rt. Rev Patrick Rooke, son-in-law of Canon Forsythe will dedicate the Massereene Chapel screens in memory of Canon Forsythe. There will be a civic celebration on 29 November at 4.00pm when we will have an opportunity to thank those from outside the parish who have made generous donations to help the restoration costs.



THE ULTIMATE MEMBERSHIP

As you all know, I recently preached on the theme of church as a spiritual gymnasium. We thought about how transformation doesn't happen by association; it happens by showing up.

A gym membership is useless if you never go. To change your heart rate or your health, you must get on that machine and do the work. Our faith operates on the exact same principle.

We aren't mere "subscribers" to a Sunday service; we are active members of a living Body - a universal body of believers expressed locally. I love our Sunday mornings: the catchups, the singing, and the quiet moments of prayer. Just as my waistline grows without exercise, my heart goes cold if I don't attend church.

The life of faith is like being a top tier football player. Every week matters. Every new season requires the same commitment and hard work as the last.

THE LENTEN "TRAINING GROUND"

Lent is our spiritual "pre-season." Like a footballer in training camp, we strip away distractions to reach peak performance through prayer, fasting, and repentance. It's great to give up chocolate, but we also want to grow stronger.



Even if Lent has passed us by, during Holy Week we can start these healthy habits:

- Set a Realistic Plan: Don't aim for a spiritual marathon. Read the Word for Today each morning, pray for the world, or read a little of Luke's Gospel daily.
- Show Up Regardless: Consistency is everything. Even when your prayer feels "rubbish," the act of showing up is a victory for your spiritual endurance.
- Start Small: You don't start with 100kg weights. If you haven't talked to God in months, start with two minutes today.

THE EASTER VICTORY

We don't sweat through a workout just to say we did it; we do it for the result. We "train" to carry the Gospel into the world. Easter reminds us that while we "do the work" of discipleship, the cost of membership was paid in full by Jesus. Coming to church trains us to follow his example, bringing grace to a world where it is in short supply.

This season let's get those faith muscles moving. Step into the training ground of our community as we prepare to celebrate the victory of the empty tomb!

The Rev Peter Blake

TOWER RESTORATION THE SKY'S THE LIMIT AND ALL SYSTEM GO!

We are finally in a position to go ahead with the tower restoration. Following a tendering process, Felix O'Hare have been awarded the contract to take care of the repairs to the stonework of the entrance elevation of the church.

Work is scheduled to begin on 16 March with an expected completing date of 31 October 2026. We are indebted to Ian Maconachie, our conservation specialist who conducted the tendering process and will oversee the work to the tower. Ian has been marvellous in co-ordinating both projects.



THE WARMTH OF A WELCOME

Several years ago, the late Sally Gamble asked me if it was ok to welcome new people when they came to worship in our church. She was worried she might be stepping on someone's toes. Sally had grasped the fact that the welcome someone new to the parish receives is the difference between them returning and joining or not coming back.



Elizabeth Moore, Shelagh Morgan and Andrea have found All Saints to be very welcoming

I remember visiting a church on holiday. I wasn't wearing my dog collar and no one said hello. I think if I was dressed in my clerics a fuss would have been made. However the impression I got on that visit was that I would find another church next week. On another occasion, in St Andrewes in Scotland, Helen and I ventured into a church we thought was an episcopal church – the equivalent of the Church of Ireland. Instead we had entered a Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) church. We were greeted by five different people. If I was moving to St Andrewes, I would certainly have joined this warm and friendly group of people.

I think we in All Saints are a welcoming group of people and over the past few years this thought has been worked out in that upwards of forty people have joined us, mainly because of the welcome and fellowship they have experienced. Below is a letter from Andrea, who is now a member of our choir. It expresses her experience of the warmth of our welcome.

To the parishioners of All Saints' Parish, Antrim

I just wanted to day thank you so much for being so supportive throughout my pregnancy. Many of you took the time to ask how I was feeling and offering me helpful tips and encouragement.

When baby Gabriel arrived unexpectedly three weeks early, our life was filled with joy. I felt safe and was so glad to share this with the parish. Little did I know the amount of support, greetings, wonderful cards and so many gifts we would receive. Thank you to the beautiful people you are in this parish to take the time to think of me and give so much to Gabriel. He is a lucky boy to join such a community.

The commitment of this parish and its parishioners to embrace Gabriel and share this joy with us have moved me and my family to tears. It reinforces to me that three years ago when I walked through the Parish Centre doors looking for a choir to join, I have found so much more. Thank you for being a community of such special people and making Antrim a special place no matter where you come from.

And finally I wish that you know how wonderful and kind you are ant that each person's act of kindness can add up and can mean the world to someone.

*Thank you and have a lovely day,
Andrea, Gabriel and Daniel Seucha*



What happened to the Easter Bunny when he misbehaved at school?
He was eggspelled.

How did the Easter Bunny get his job?
He had eggs-perience.

How does the Easter Bunny stay healthy?
Eggs-ercise, specifically hare-obics

What kind of coffee does the Easter Bunny like?
Egg-spresso

MOTHERS' UNION DINNER

Almost 50 members and their 'significant others' attended an excellent evening at the Dunadry Inn on Friday 20 February. It is most encouraging to have enrolled several new and younger members into our branch over the past few years. From the younger new members right through to our most senior members, we had a most enjoyable dinner with many compliments to the chefs and waiting staff. After the dinner a goodly number stayed on to enjoy the music and the dancing. It is so uplifting to have a group of committee members who know how to worship, serve and enjoy themselves.



THE EXTRA MILE BUCKET

Through the donations we have received in the Extra Mile bucket we have helped raise £1000s for fantastic projects. Most recently we have purchased two shelter boxes which will be used to provide two families, whose homes have been devastated in a natural disaster with a place of security.

Our next project was inspired through a visit of the Rev Tom Robinson from kids4schools who are building houses in Tanzania. People who previously lived in mud huts, which are not very water tight and offer no security are being provided with houses constructed with concrete blocks and a tin roof. So far over 80 have been complete at a cost of £5,000 each.

As we look forward to worshipping again in our beautiful House of God, we are setting a target of providing one house as our thank offering.



THE EVERGREENS CLUB

Are you bored and tired of thinking of things to do? Why not join us at the All Saints' Evergreen Club which meets on the second Tuesday of each month between 11am and 12.30pm and any member of the parish or their friends in the 60+ age range are very welcome to attend. Why not come along and enjoy the 'craic' and the entertainment provided. For £8 you will have tea or coffee and biscuits, an entertaining programme which includes a variety of engaging speakers and activities followed by a light lunch. Great value for a morning's entertainment.

April - Easter Bonnets contest

May - Singing and dancing

We look forward to seeing you.



BLEND BREAKFAST

Our Blend Breakfast continues in the Top of the Town continues to be a great success. Body, mind and spirit are well catered for in the space of an hour and a half as Blend combines the most excellent of breakfasts with the opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new parishioners who will become friends. There is also an opportunity to hear about what belonging to All Saints means to one of our parishioners. Our next Blend Breakfast will be on 25 April at 10.00am.



All Saints Presents
BLEND
Food, chat & friendship

LARGE FRY
 TEA/COFFEE
 £10

UPSTAIRS IN THE TOP OF THE TOWN



A WASTE OF TIME?

A church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Letter to the Editor

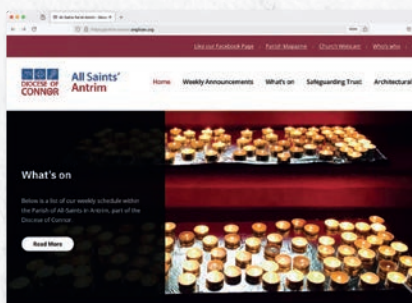
ALL SAINTS' ONLINE

YouTube is preinstalled on almost every phone and most smart TVs. The technology in our living rooms has advanced so much that many of us have a fire stick or smart tv. Watching on a TV is going to give a better experience than watching on a mobile phone, laptop or a tablet. There are 3 ways of getting to the Parish YouTube site. Once there you can see services that are being streamed live and services that have been recorded.

DIRECT LINK: Please type this link into your web browser <https://www.youtube.com/@allsaints4713/streams> or **allsaints4713** directly into YouTube. Make sure to hit subscribe to make the Parish channel easier to find next time.

PARISH WEBSITE: Visit <https://antrim.connor.anglican.org/> and click on the link for church webcam

ALL SAINTS FACEBOOK: Go to the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsparishantrim> and click on "Watch Now"



WHO'S WHO

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The Clergy will be grateful for any notification of serious illness in the Parish and for information regarding the admission and discharge of parishioners from hospitals outside Antrim.